

**SYDNEY
CSA AGM AND SOCIAL
ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT PAULINE GUNewardENE
AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CSA
ON SATURDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2022 AT PENNANT HILLS COMMUNITY
CENTRE**



Good evening, guests and members of the Ceylon Society of Australia. It gives me very great pleasure to welcome you to this our Annual General Meeting and Social in our 25th year of existence!

We have gone forward from our beginnings on the 30th of August 1997 to the celebration of our 25 year anniversary held on Sunday 28th August this year. It was wonderful to reminisce on the pathway that has brought us here, to acknowledge the contributions made by past Committee members, with dedication and commitment to the ideals and mission of the founding fathers, in fostering the great historical and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka.

The celebratory 25th anniversary Cocktail Party was a great success. I went through the achievements of the past years and acknowledged the contributions of past presidents. We had a recorded address on the big screen by Founder President Hugh Karunanayake from Melbourne, then talks by Past Presidents Harry de Sayrah and Thiru Arumugam. Michael (Rohan) Sourjah, the Founder Secretary, talked about his memories of that time, Sumane Iyer, a past Editor, sent in a message for reading out and so did past Editor Doug Jones, both of whom unfortunately could not attend due to health issues. The cake was cut by Harry de Sayrah and Thiru Arumugam, after which the food and wine flowed and everyone enjoyed a merry evening.

Hugh Karunanayake has taken us through the history of the CSA in the November issue of *The Ceylankan*, and I am sure you will find it of great interest to read about the antecedents of your Society.

I would like to mention here with pride the significant achievement of CSA, in that this November 2022 edition of *The Ceylankan* is our 100th issue, having been in continuous publication from inception thanks to the untiring dedication of our Editors. It is a bigger than usual journal, with pictures in colour, and our Editor, Adam Raffel, has made an excellent production which I am certain you will find good reading.

To recap the activities over the past year, we held the two General Meetings in Sydney in February and May addressed by speakers and, as mentioned, the scheduled August Meeting was converted into the CSA's 25th anniversary celebration.

February 2022

The speaker was Roderick de Sylva, a long time Tea Taster of 24 years in all, who spoke on "The Development of the Tea Industry in Sri Lanka". It was a fascinating look at the history of how the most important export industry in the country had its roots, growing and developing into the internationally highly rated "Ceylon Tea", and covering all aspects. The hands on tasting session that followed was enjoyed by all the attendees.

May 2022

Dr Leonard Pinto was the speaker for the May meeting, taking us through “The Evolution of Governance in Sri Lanka”. He covered the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods based on the systems of governance developed over time, with first a local monarchy, then a colonial master monarchy, and finally the parliamentary democracy elected by Sri Lankans. The talk gave attendees much information on the historical trajectory of governance in Sri Lanka.

Our overall membership now stands at 294 - 241 in Australia, 24 in Sri Lanka, 21 in other overseas countries, 2 Life Members and 6 gift subscriptions, with 12 Complimentaries of our highly regarded journal being sent out to various institutions.

The Melbourne and Colombo Chapters have begun to hold meetings again post Covid and are actively rejuvenating their membership activities. Our Sydney parent body General Meetings take place on the last Sunday evenings of February, May and August, with the AGM and Social on the one before last Saturday in November. It is only three meetings for the year, and I do hope you will make every effort to attend. Your ongoing interest and enthusiasm for attending meetings will encourage us Committee members running your Society.

My plea as always to you all is to please try to introduce at least one new member to CSA from among your circle of friends and colleagues – that would work wonders for our member base! Can you please try harder in 2023? In particular, new younger age group members would ensure the Ceylon Society of Australia continues to flourish and evokes more interest in the wonderful historical and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka.

The Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2022 have been audited by Rienzie Fonseka. Our thanks to Rienzie for helping us with this over the last seven years.

Copies of the audited Accounts have been emailed to Members for information, and a few explanations would be appropriate, while noting that we use the Australian taxation year of 1 July-30 June although subscriptions are based on a calendar year.

1) The receipts show a healthy balance thanks to the 2021 AGM and Social providing a boost as always to our finances.

2) The AGM Expenditure item for 2022 is showing a much higher figure in comparison to the figure for 2021. This is due to the AGM and Social not being held in December 2020 because of Covid restrictions.

3) The cost of postage for Australia and Overseas has gone up and keeps rising. The initiatives put in place last year by Treasurer Deepak, to use Printpost for Australian journals and for the Colombo Chapter journals to be printed in Sri Lanka, have resulted in a saving of approximately \$1,000 compared with the figure for 2021.

4) Printing costs have also risen by \$1,500 over the period under review.

In the current climate of escalating costs, maintaining subscriptions at the level we are doing now is a very difficult balancing act, although we are striving to do so by identifying savings wherever possible.

I would like to acknowledge here the contributions of the various Committee members, who give of their services voluntarily with the commitment to do the best possible for the CSAs overall functioning. Adam has been in the role of Editor for a year now and is doing an excellent job of maintaining the iconic status of the journal. Sunimal has kept the secretarial function going smoothly, Deepak is constantly on the lookout for savings, Amal is responsible for the mailouts of the journals and makes sure they get to you as soon as they are ready with the printer. Earlson and Kumar, who joined the Committee from this year, have been very helpful in the arrangements for meetings. Hugh and Thiru are great mainstays of regular contributions to the journal, with Harry and Srilal having long time knowledge of CSA.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you most sincerely for your presence here tonight, which makes it all worthwhile for the Committee's efforts to organise this Social for your pleasure. We hope you will enjoy the evening of fellowship and socialising and the Singalong with carols – which will move into dancing as well as singing at halfway point as usual. Please do join in with gusto!

Catering this year again is by the well known Flavour of Ceylon, and I would like to thank Aquinas for his helping us with this function despite his many commitments at this time of year. I hope you will enjoy the menu set up for you.

Let's make the most of this evening and have fun together in a pre-Christmas celebration! Life is a gift – for living well in the moment, in the here and now. Let us make this moment happy and full of joy!

Thank you.

Pauline Gunewardene
President, Ceylon Society of Australia



Outgoing Secretary Sunimal Fernando farewelled by Pauline



PHOTOS OF THE CSA CHRISTMAS SOCIAL 2022

BY MAHAL SELVADURAI and SENANIE DE SILVA



Singalong and Christmas Carols with CSA Choir



Roger Menezes



Shirani Rodrigo



Senanie de Silva, Amal and Rosani Wahab



Devika and Priyanga de Fonseka



Avinder and Nirupa Paul



Shantha and Rienzie Fonseka



Gunasmin and Esmal Lye



*Hyacinth Jones
(Life Member)*



CSA COMMITTEE 2023 (from left to right) Amal Wahab (Social Convenor), Deepak Pritamdas (Treasurer & Public Officer), Sunimal Fernando (outgoing Secretary) Harry de Sayrah OAM (Public Relations Officer), Pauline Gunewardene (President), Adam Raffel (Editor), Presenji Jayawickrema (incoming Secretary) and Thiru Arumugam (Ex Officio). Absent: Doug Jones (Life Member) Hugh Karunanayake (Life Member based in Melbourne) and Kumar Rasiah (ex-Officio).



Earlson Forbes (Publications Officer)



Rohini and Sumane Iyer



Harry and Imelda de Sayrah

*Pauline Gunewardene
(President)*



Kanathi Perera and Chandra Senaratne



Deanna and Shankar Sathanandan



*Lucian and Srikanthi
Wijetunga*



Sunimal Fernando



Malini and Thiru Arumugam



Rex and Ranji Perera with Dr Thilak and Lalitha Weerasinghe



Lucian Wijetunga getting into the baidi groove!!



George Cooke, Elaine Tissera, Amira Cooke, Kanta Abeyasinghe